

ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT

6 October 1983

NICARAGUA/U.S. JENNINGS: Good evening. We begin tonight by concentrating on Nicaragua. There have been more charges and revelations today about CIA involvement in the war against Nicaragua's Sandinista government. Nicaragua has shown reporters the wreckage of a plane it shot down, and introduced the pilot who said he was working for the CIA. The Sandinista government has warned Costa Rica to stop letting anti-Sandinista forces use its territory for which to launch attacks. The U.S. supports that group in Costa Rica and a similar group based in Honduras. Now, as our Pentagon correspondent John McWethy reports, there are signs the CIA is helping those groups even after they cross the Nicaraguan border.

MCWETHY: Government forces say the CIA has been air dropping food and ammunition to American-backed guerrillas operating inside Nicaragua. The flights are said to originate in both El Salvador and Honduras. It was one such flight, this time a DC-3, that the Sandinista government of Nicaragua claims they shot down earlier this week. The pilot of the plane said he was hired to do the job by the CIA. Last month the CIA, apparently provided guerrillas with another kind of help. This time airplanes. On September 8, two planes bombed the airport of Nicaragua's capital, Managua. These were the first guerrilla air strikes and were a major escalation in the insurgent war against Nicaragua. One of the planes was shot down, a Cessna 404, and it has provided a fascinating trail of clues outlined today in the New York Times that appear to lead directly to the CIA. Ownership of the plane was traced to a McLean, Va., company, *Investair, whose officers have been involved in previous CIA front operations. They sold the aircraft to a Panamanian company at the end of June, and within two months it was used in a bombing raid in Nicaragua. Sources outside the U.S. government said the Cessna was loaded with bombs at *Elpanga Airport in El Salvador, both the commercial and military airfield. The pilot of the Cessna was *Augustan Romain, a Nicaraguan revolutionary who had defected to the U.S. in 1982. Flight documents pulled from the plane indicated Romain personally picked up the aircraft in Panama and delivered it to Costa Rica. There were also instructions on how to make a covert contact with the American embassy in Costa Rica, passwords and locations. So in addition to America's highly publicized military and economic aid to Central America, the United States is also deeply involved in a covert war against Nicaragua, a war about which the American public and the press still know very little but which appears to be aimed at the overthrow of Nicaragua's leftist government. John McWethy, ABC News, the Pentagon.

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NICARAGUA/U.S. RATHER: Meanwhile, various sources claim the CIA was involved with a small plane shot down early last month while trying to bomb Nicaragua's main airbase in Managua. The CIA connection was reported by the Associated Press and some newspapers. The plane's pilot, who was killed, has been identified as a member of a rebel group.